

Policy on Dealing with Unsolicited Information

Information about institutions ordinarily comes to the Commission through two sources: self- studies and reports prepared by the institution, including the institution's Annual Report; and reports of visiting teams, for which institutions have the opportunity to comment on factual errors and to submit responses. Information from these processes, including any meeting with the Commission as part of the review, is not considered unsolicited, as it results from normal Commission processes of review and reporting.

Information about an institution may also come to the Commission through the processes on Complaints Against Affiliated Institutions and also Public Comments. In these cases, the Commission has policies to ensure that the institution has the right to comment on a complaint or public comment before either is presented to the Commission.

Additional unsolicited information may come to the Commission from the U.S. Department of Education, regarding an institution's compliance responsibilities under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, including an institution's most recent student loan default rates, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that may be provided by the U.S. Department of Education. In these cases as well, the Commission has processes to ensure that the institution has the opportunity to respond before the Commission considers the information.

Occasionally, the Commission is presented with unsolicited information of a serious nature by public bodies or the press that would appear to be material to the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* or its policies. In such cases, an institution may volunteer for a special report or visit by Commission representatives.

In all cases, the Commission will give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation- related information revealed about an institution between periods of scheduled review. Following review of the information by staff, the institution will be given an adequate period of time to respond to the information. If, after reviewing the response, Commission staff determines that the information is material to Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* and policies, the information and documentation, along with the institution's response, will be forwarded to the Commission or its Executive Committee for review and appropriate action.

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